

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is emergency preparedness?

Arizona schools have taken steps to ensure your child's safety while in school. Each public school is required to develop an emergency response plan that meets the minimum standards established by the Arizona Department of Education and Arizona Division of Emergency Management. [ARS Title 15-341 \(A\) 34](#). Emergency preparedness is basically identifying the steps that will be taken in the event of an emergency, such as contact information, communications, and evacuation plans.

How will my child's school handle an emergency situation?

All Arizona public schools are required to have an emergency response plan that conforms to the [Arizona School Response Plan, Minimum and Recommended Requirements](#). The specifics of each plan differ for each location. The response to each situation will differ based on the specifics of that situation. The flexibility of the plan is key to the success of the response. In general, each plan involves the designation of an emergency response team; development of evacuation, shelter-in-place, and lockdown procedures; preparation of a portable emergency response kit that contains key information and supplies; designation of one or more appropriate evacuation sites; provisions for training personnel and updating the plan; checklists for dealing with specific types of incidents; and resources for help before, during and after an event.

What is lockdown?

An emergency may prevent the safe evacuation of a school building and require steps to isolate students and faculty from danger by instituting a school lockdown. In an interior lockdown situation, all students are kept in classrooms or other designated locations that are away from the danger. Faculty members are responsible for accounting for students and ensuring that no one leaves the safe area. School personnel will also secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building. Exterior lockdown procedures may also be used to ensure the safety of students when an incident occurs in the

community. Parents are permitted access to the building and to their children if it is safe for them to do so.

In the event of a terrorist attack or other emergency situation, will my school go into lockdown?

The specific actions taken by schools in any emergency situation, both district wide and at individual schools will depend on the specifics of the situation. Any action taken would depend on several factors, including the level of threat and the advice of local, state, and federal agencies. The safety of students and staff members will be the primary concern in any decision.

What will my school do if an act of war or other emergency situation occurs while students are in school?

The specific actions taken by schools in any emergency situation, both district wide and at individual schools will depend on the specifics of the situation. Any action taken would depend on several factors, including the level of threat and the advice of local, state, and federal agencies. The safety of students and staff members will be the primary concern in any decision.

What is shelter-in-place?

Shelter-in-place is a short-term solution to a short-term problem. If an accident or attack that created contaminated air occurred in the nearby area, everyone would be brought indoors, including those in trailers. Building personnel would close all windows and doors and shut down the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system (HVAC). This would create a neutral pressure in the building, meaning the contaminated air would not be drawn into the building.

Shelter-in-place is a short-term measure (measured in minutes or hours, not days) designed to use a facility and its indoor atmosphere to temporarily separate people from a hazardous outdoor environment. The alternative would be to evacuate into a hazardous situation, thereby causing harm to all involved.

No stockpiling of water and food is needed for shelter-in-place. Any event of a magnitude that required such stockpiling would require that we all take our direction from the state or federal emergency management officials. Parents are concerned that, during a shelter-in-place activity, they couldn't pick up their children and might be separated from them for long periods of time. That will not happen; if the air outside the school is safe for parents to breathe, it is safe for their children to breathe. School district personnel shall develop a plan that uses the best possible method for ensuring the safety of students and staff members in this type of crisis. Remember, it is not the school's intention to keep children from their parents. School personnel are merely endeavoring to keep children safe for parents until the parents can pick them up.

What measures are being taken for students in trailers?

Contact your school principal to determine the measures that are in place to insure the safety of students and staff in trailers.

Why are you keeping children from their parents?

Schools do not intend to keep children from their parents if a crisis occurs during school hours or school activities. It is the school districts intent to make sure that children are safe inside their schools until such a time that the threat has been

reduced. Parents will be informed of the parent-student reunification center location via the schools notification system and local media.

What is a parent reunification site?

If public safety officials require that a school building be evacuated, students and staff members will be safely transported to a designated parent-student reunification center. Parents will be informed of the reunification location via the schools designated notification system and local media. At the reunification center, students will be released to their parents upon presentation of proper identification.

What if my child is riding a school bus at the time of a crisis?

School bus drivers will be in contact with the Office of Transportation for instructions in the event that a crisis occurs while students are in transport. Bus drivers will be informed to use common sense and not travel toward the crisis location. Parents will be informed of the parent-student reunification center location via your schools designated system and local media.

Can I pick up my child?

Parents are allowed to pick up their children unless public safety officials have declared a shelter-in-place response, or there is some other reason why access to the facility is restricted. During any emergency, school personnel will maintain as safe and normal an environment for children within the school as is possible. School is not automatically canceled in emergency situations. Remember, school may be the safest place for children to be.

Who can pick up my children?

Children will not be released to individuals who are not authorized on the student's emergency card or who do not have written parent authorization. At the start of each school year parents and guardians must complete the emergency card. Parents and guardians are encouraged to update the emergency card as needed throughout the school year. Friends and neighbors may sign a child or children out with written permission from a parent or parents. Schools prefer to have written permission on the day that a child's pickup will change, but schools may also keep written permission on file. School offices will keep the permission notes--usually they will attach them to the emergency care card(s) of those involved. Schools will also ask for identification when the child is released to the one(s) mentioned in the permission note. It is advisable to communicate with the teacher as well, perhaps with a copy of the signed written note.

What about my child's medication?

If your child takes medication regularly, you, the parent, should make sure that the school has an appropriate amount of additional medication on hand. Talk with your child's school nurse for more information.

Can I contact my child?

Parents are asked not to call the school in emergency situations so phone lines can remain accessible for handling the specific situation. Parents will be kept informed via the schools notification system and local media.

How will my children know what to do in the event of a terrorist attack?

Inform your children that, if a crisis occurs while they are in school, their teacher will provide them with appropriate instructions. More information is available at the

school site. Parents are also encouraged to prepare a family disaster plan and practice it so that everyone will remember what to do if a disaster does occur. Everyone in the household, including children, should play a part in the family's response and recovery efforts. Teach your children how to recognize danger signals. Make sure your children know what smoke detectors, fire alarms, and local community warning systems (horns, sirens) sound like.